MISSIOLOGY FROM THE COAL FACE

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Discipleship is, in essence, simply following Jesus. It means forsaking all, despite difficulties, suffering and even death, primarily death to self. Discipleship is in danger of getting lost in trendy terminologies and packaged programmes.
Category: Observations

I'm thoroughly enjoying reading The Missiology behind the Story: Voices from the Arab World. I'll write a review when I finish it, but for now, I thought I'd post a few quotes that I found particularly challenging.

> *How are Christians across the Middle East responding to such changes? One recurring theme is that new opportunities have emerged for the church to express its faith and hope in Jesus, to be agents of transformation in local communities and to share the good news of Jesus with the ever-rising numbers willing to listen.*

> *The Druze were at one point ready to convert to Christianity en masse in order to avoid conscription into the Sultanâ€™s army, but American Board missionaries objected to this based upon their Western individualistic understanding of salvation.*

> *This is exactly the gospel that we have received, good news of reconciliation and goodwill towards all the nations, even the nations with whom our countries might have shared a bad history. For it is a mission that goes beyond the political and historical narrative and transcends it to a divine narrative of unconditional love.*

> *Moreover, the fact that some missionaries considered spreading the Western civilization as equal to spreading the kingdom of God in the Middle East was never the best approach since it removes the people they are reaching from their unique cultural identity.*

> *â€œActually, the old-type missionary is gradually disappearing from most parts of the Arab world. In his place, a new type is emerging by the tens of thousands: guest workers migrating as teachers, engineers, foremen, artisans, doctors . . . labourers, etc.â€ Â These new workers often moved into Islamic communities and worked within the context of that community. Accad, a pioneer in contextualization, observed: â€œIt would be insensitive â€“ in fact, negligent â€“ if we were to completely disregard the Qurâ€™an. Why? Because it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss spiritual things with Muslims if we ignore their primary spiritual guidebook.â€*

> *To say that we are living in extraordinary times is an understatement. We are witnessing how*

God the Father through Christ and by the Spirit is acting within the Muslim world. The sheer numbers of those who are engaging with, enquiring about, and learning from the Bible about the Christian faith is unprecedented. Many have fully embraced and accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord â€“ something that has not happened on the present scale since Islam entered into world history in the seventh century.

Christians often treat discipleship as a system or set of approaches, with a wide range of interpretations regarding application and implementation. Discipleship is, in essence, simply following Jesus. It means forsaking all, despite difficulties, suffering and even death, primarily death to self. Discipleship is in danger of getting lost in trendy terminologies and packaged programmes.

I am overwhelmed by the variety of â€œdiscipleshipsâ€ on offer and get lost in the supermarket of choices, which seem to focus on â€œhatchingâ€ new followers quickly. Now, when depth and maturity are most crucial, we still seem to be focused on numbers of followers, groups and leaders.